

Case 2864

***Termes lacteus* Froggatt, 1898 (currently *Coptotermes lacteus*; Insecta, Isoptera): proposed conservation of the specific name**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the specific name of *Coptotermes lacteus* (Froggatt, 1898), an abundant and well known termite of south-east Australia. Froggatt published the specific name as *lactis* in a 'popular' work the previous year, but following his own rejection of this spelling it has remained unused.

1. Froggatt (1897, unnumbered plate facing p. 297) illustrated parts of a termite from New South Wales under the name '*Termes lactis*, n. sp.'. On p. 297 he commented that 'in a concluding paper in my Monograph of the Australian Termitidae, being published in the Proceedings of the Linnean Society of N.S.W., I propose to call it the 'Milk Termite' (*Termes lactis*, n. sp.)'. The illustration is an indication under Article 12b(7) of the Code, so that *lactis* is an available name even though no taxonomic description was given.

2. Froggatt (1898, p. 721), in the third and final part of the monograph to which he had referred in 1897, formally described the species as *Termes lacteus*; he cited but evidently rejected his previous spelling. On p. 723 Froggatt mentioned his 1897 work as being a 'popular paper'; however this may be, the alteration of the name is an unjustified emendation and *lacteus* Froggatt, 1898 is therefore a junior objective synonym of *lactis* Froggatt, 1897 (Article 33b(iii) of the Code).

3. Except for entries under the synonymy of *lacteus* in Desneux (1904, p. 34) and Hill (1942, p. 156), the name *lactis* has been ignored or overlooked or, as in Hill (1926, p. 204) and Hill (1932, p. 142) in which Froggatt (1897) was inaccurately cited as the author of the name *lacteus*, has been regarded as being the same as *lacteus*.

4. Desneux (1904, p. 34) placed *T. lacteus* in the subgenus *Coptotermes* Wasmann, 1896; Silvestri (1909, p. 293) treated *Coptotermes* as a full genus and so have subsequent authors.

5. The species has been referred to as *Coptotermes lacteus* in a very wide range of publications, for it is a species that has been studied extensively in terms of its basic biology, the resistance of materials to attack by it, and its relationships as judged from the chemistry of its cuticular hydrocarbons. Major works using *C. lacteus* include Ratcliffe, Gay & Greaves (1952), Gay & Calaby (1970), Hadlington (1987), Watson (1988) and Watson & Gay (1991) (general texts); Hill (1942) and Snyder (1949) (taxonomy); Gay, Greaves, Holdaway & Wetherly (1955, 1957), Gay & Wetherly (1969), Lenz et al. (1987) and Lenz, Watson, Barrett & Runko (1990) (maintenance conditions, resistance of materials and soil barriers); Watson & Sewell

(1981) and Lenz, Barrett & Miller (1988) (castes); and Brown et al. (1990) (cuticular hydrocarbons and taxonomy). These references are representative rather than comprehensive and serve as examples.

6. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the specific name *lactis* Froggatt, 1897, as published in the binomen *Termes lactis*, for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *lacteus* Froggatt, 1898, as published in the binomen *Termes lacteus*;
- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *lactis* Froggatt, 1897, as published in the binomen *Termes lactis* and as suppressed in (1) above.

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